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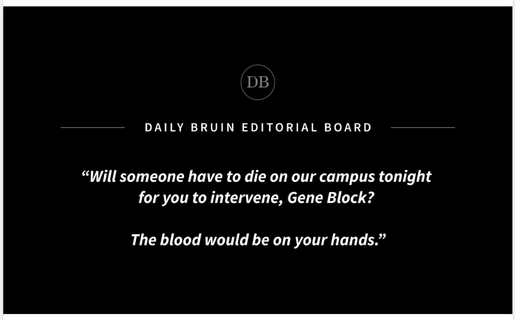
EDITORIALS, OPINION

Editorial: UCLA is complicit in violence inflicted upon protesters, failed to protect students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DAILY BRUIN EDITORIAL BOARD
"Will someone have to die on our campus tonight for you to intervene, Gene Block?
The blood would be on your hands."

By Editorial Board
May 1, 2024 3:06 a.m.

It began with ear-piercing screams of wailing babies loudly emitting from speakers.

Counter-protesters tearing down the barricades. Laser pointers flashing into the encampment. People in masks waving strobe lights.

Tear gas. Pepper spray. Violent beatings.

Fireworks sparked at the border of the encampment, raining down on tents and the individuals inside.

At around 5 p.m. yesterday, Chancellor Gene Block sent an email to the UCLA student body claiming that security presence in the area had been increased. That was not visible in the midst of escalating violence. And even with the security present, there was no mediation far into the night.

UC President Michael Drake expressed support for Block's decision to declare the encampment "unlawful" Tuesday evening, adding that action was needed when the safety of students was being threatened. And yet, in spite of official statements from the university and the UC, we witness little being done on the university's part to ensure the protection of students who exercise their rights.

Mary Osako, vice chancellor of UCLA Strategic Communications, released a statement at 12:40 a.m. acknowledging the violence, adding that the fire department and medical personnel were involved.

"We are sickened by this senseless violence and it must end," Osako said.

This came after a source in the encampment told the Daily Bruin that at least five protestors have been injured.

But for hours, UCLA administration stood by and watched as the violence escalated. LAPD did not arrive on the scene until slightly after 1 a.m. – once Los Angeles mayor Karen Bass sent them in for assistance at Block's request.

Daily Bruin reporters on the scene were slapped and indirectly sprayed with irritants. Despite also being students, they were offered no protection.

The world is watching. As helicopters fly over Royce Hall, we have a question.

Will someone have to die on our campus tonight for you to intervene, Gene Block?

The blood would be on your hands.

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Editorial Board

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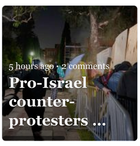

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